

Sikhs in the U.S.A. and Canada
Issue—Part II

The Sikh Sansar

USA — CANADA



QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF THE SIKH FOUNDATION

VOL. 1
NO. 4

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THE SIKH FOUNDATION
USA



DECEMBER 1972



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THE SIKH SANSAR: Sansar means universe. Traditionally the material universe was considered an "illusion" (Maya). The Sikhs consider the material universe as a manifestation of cosmic spirit. This journal will present the material and spiritual aspects of Sikh life.

THE SIKH SANSAR is owned and managed by the Sikh Foundation, P.O. Box 727, Redwood City, California 94064, which is a non-political, non-profit organization dedicated to dissemination of knowledge about the history, literature, art, culture, and religious precepts of the Sikhs.

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A NEED TO FILL

The settlements of Sikhs in U.S.A. and Canada are small and distantly spaced from each other. Accordingly, we suffer from a high degree of isolation not only amongst ourselves but also from the fountainhead of Sikh culture in the Punjab. This isolation can lead not only to a lack of intercommunication amongst Sikhs and Sikh organisations in different settlements but also to considerable waste of community resources due to the diffusion and duplication of efforts.

In this modern day it has been conclusively demonstrated in practically every walk of life that a paramount force for the success of a group effort lies behind a strategy for deployment of the available resources to the chosen objectives. We have seen this to occur in the fields of business, military, social services, industry as well as religion and culture. An organisation that recognizes its needs realistically, evaluates its resources accurately, selects its objectives analytically and then deploys its resources aggressively to meet its defined objectives, will invariably succeed. On the other hand, unplanned and uncoordinated efforts seldom produce the desired results.

Let us discuss some of the crucial needs of the Sikhs residing in the U.S.A. and Canada. They can be enumerated as follows:

1. Sources of constant rejuvenation of the religious and cultural beliefs.
2. Means of a constructive interaction between members of the community at various locations, not only in the U.S.A. and Canada but also in India and other parts of the world.
3. Means for continuing education about Sikh history, culture and religion to the family members of the Sikhs and in particular to the children.
4. Conveniently located and well-managed places of worship (Gurudawaras).
5. Means for creating better understanding of the Sikh culture to other Americans and Canadians.
6. Means for creating an atmosphere of respect and understanding about the Sikhs in order to provide for equal professional, social, cultural and political opportunities for them.
7. Availability of adequate literature and art of the Sikhs.

8. Facilities for inviting scholars, lecturers, singers (hymns) and religious leaders from abroad on tour to Sikh settlements in the U.S.A. and Canada.

Fulfillment of all the above needs will serve to meet two basic objectives, viz:

1. Provide for the necessary inspiration and inducement for the Sikhs (and their children) settled in the U.S.A. and Canada to maintain their religious, cultural and traditional values, and

2. Provide for sufficient education about Sikh culture to other Americans and Canadians in order that the resident Sikhs may command understanding and opportunity for their social, professional, cultural and intellectual advancement.

Having enumerated the basic objectives and needs of the Sikhs, let us take an inventory of resources available:

1. An immeasurable reserve of dedication and enthusiasm of the Sikhs.
2. The basic strength of Sikh values and principles.
3. The dynamic spirit and professionalism of the Sikhs in most endeavours.
4. The material wealth amassed by various Sikhs and their desire to serve the cause.
5. The unqualified support afforded by Sikhs and Sikh organisations in India to Sikhs in the U.S.A. and Canada.
6. A great reserve of Sikh talents in every profession, and
7. An increasing interest in Sikh culture on the part of the Western world.

Armed with these impressive though limited resources, we still suffer from a great deal of fragmentation and lack of organisation. Has the time not come for the leaders of the local Sikh communities to take stock of our limited resources and join hands to meet the Panths needs? Let us pray for the enlightenment and unity of the Sikh leaders, for there is a great "need to fill" and it will take a great deal of vision, planning, unity, dedication and coordination among all the Sikh settlements in the U.S.A. and Canada to fulfill it.

SAGA OF THE AMERICAN SIKH

GURNAM SINGH SIDHU*

The struggles of the early Sikh immigrants and their settlement in California make an interesting study of a minority group which until recently paid a great price for their share of the American dream. These distinctive-looking people had many unique problems during their period of adjustment in the early twentieth century America. In the modern liberal social climate of the United States, the Sikhs are beginning to make a positive contribution to the American society and are destined to provide an inspiring example for other Sikhs the world over.

The story of the struggles, adjustments and achievements of the early Sikh immigrants is fascinating, full of adventure and anecdotes and in some respects quite stirring and heartrending. Sikh pioneers, drawn by the magnetism of economic opportunity, came largely from the rural Punjab and were not sufficiently equipped with education or industrial skills. But the motives, ambitions and spirit of adventure were the same that impelled immigrants to the U.S.A. from all parts of the world. The ethnocentric attitudes of the European-American majority in those days reflected in the hostile reactions of organized labor and government officials made the existence of the Sikh pioneers in America quite precarious.

The immigration of Sikhs into North America became significant during the closing years of the 19th century. In fact, Sikhs were the first among the people of India to migrate to America in significant numbers. A few Indian students, lecturers, businessmen, and swamis, etc., did come during earlier times, but none put their roots in America. It is important to put the life and activities of the early Sikh immigrants in proper perspective since available documents¹ are full of ethnic misrepresentations and cultural prejudices of those days against the "Hindus," as the Sikhs and all other Indians were called. When other accusations against the Hindu appeared ineffective, he could be assumed to be a polygamist or likely to become a public charge.² The word

Hindu was used by Americans to describe all the people from India regardless of religion, to avoid confusion with the word Indian, incorrectly used to describe the native races of America. On the Pacific Coast, in most instances, the word Hindu was applied to the Sikhs.

The first Sikh settlement in North America was in British Columbia and large Sikh communities still thrive there. Although the problems and conditions of life of the Sikhs in Canada and the U.S. in the early period were very similar, this study pertains to the Sikhs in the U.S. and especially to the California Sikhs who were largely engaged in agricultural work. Only a brief sketch of the life of these American Sikhs can be presented here. What is particularly noteworthy is the contrast of their life style with the trends among the new Sikh immigrants in the relatively benign and liberal social climate of modern American society.

Initial Influx

During the era following the British victory over the Sikh Empire in 1849, the contacts of the Sikhs with the British colonies increased and more of them began to travel from Punjab to the major cities of the Orient and elsewhere. Because of their easily distinguished appearance, military background, and reputation for moral integrity, they were preferred for employment as policemen, jailguards, and watchmen in places like Singapore, Hong Kong, and Shanghai. Their contacts with the agents of Canadian and American corporations in these cities and the efforts of steamship companies encouraged their travel to British Columbia. Letters to friends back home about the wealth in America lured many others in search of this modern El Dorado. The stories of riches and economic opportunities in the New World had also reached Punjab through Sikh troops who, after attending Queen Victoria's

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Jubilee in London in 1887, were sent through the other dominions, including Canada. Later on steamship companies in their advertisements in the Punjabi language, aimed at the Sikhs in the Punjab, publicized the prospects of employment in the New World, although this practice was vehemently condemned by some of the organized labor unions in America.

Conflict and Barriers in the New World

Up to the year 1903, the number of Sikh immigrants to the Pacific Coast of the American continent was not well recorded. When they began arriving at the rate of about two thousand per year, chiefly to British Columbia, they quickly encountered opposition. Due to the hostile and at times violent reactions of organized labor, and the generally antagonistic attitudes of the society toward the racial, ethnic and cultural minorities, the pressure for their exclusion from Canada increased. In 1909 the Canadian Government, with the concurrence of the British Government of India, who did not want Indians abroad to become a seditious voice, passed legislation to restrict immigration of Indians and even to deprive those already living there of their due citizenship rights. The events and tragedies surrounding the *Kamagata Maru* voyage³ from India to Canada and back in 1914 pointed to the desperate situation and showed the extent to which the Canadian and the British Indian Governments were ready to go, to keep Indians out of America. Many Sikhs went back to India and some followed the example of the few others who had migrated earlier to the U.S.A.

The severe restrictions enforced by the Canadian Government against the Indians resulted in an increase in their number entering the U.S., where farming, logging, mining, and railroad construction readily provided jobs for most of them. Thus in the years 1907 through 1910 a total of 4901 Indians⁴ (mostly Sikhs on the Pacific Coast) were admitted to the U.S. Soon their number, as recorded by immigration authorities, approached six thousand, and according to some sources⁵ there were more than ten thousand on the Pacific Coast. Pressure from labor unions who considered Asians a threat to their economic well being and from antagonistic political groups brought about heavy restrictions on further immigration of Indians.

Discriminatory policies and exclusion from naturalization and property rights followed. One

can imagine the wretched plight of those hundreds of men each year (1597 men during 1907-1910)⁴ who after travelling half way around the world under agonizing circumstances were refused admission at the port of entry. The official reasons for refusal (which depended on the whim of the immigration or medical officers) were usually either mental, physical, and moral shortcomings, or the likelihood of becoming a public charge.

Even before the Sikh population on the Pacific Coast became noticeable, a great deal of opposition to the immigration of Chinese and Japanese had been built up. The severest reactions came from labor groups working together in such organizations as the Asiatic Exclusion League, Janitors Protective Association, Anti-Jap Laundry League, San Francisco Democratic Club, Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners, Boot and Shoe Workers, Native Sons of the Golden West, and so on. Inspired by these groups, there were frequent race riots against the Asians. One can judge the conditions from the following excerpts reproduced from the proceedings of the Asiatic Exclusion League⁶ (although this source could hardly be expected to present a balanced view):

1. Sept. 7, 1907, Vancouver, B.C. This date marked the enactment of one of the most bitter race riots that ever took place upon the North American Continent. A mob of more than 1000 (some said 10,000) men swept through the Oriental quarter, breaking windows and inflicting other damage amounting to thousands of dollars.
2. Dec. 1906, Alder, Wash. About a dozen Japanese in leaving a train were set upon by a crowd, badly beaten, driven down the track and told not to return.
3. Jan. 1907, Swift Current, B.C. A Chinaman was hanged for marrying a white woman after the town clerk had refused to authorize the marriage.
4. Sept. 4, 1907, Bellingham, Wash. A dispatch informed us that 6 Hindus and 400 Sikhs were being guarded in City Hall and that somewhere between Bellingham and the British Columbia border there were 750 more badly beaten, frightened, hungry and half clad men making their way to the Canadian territory.
5. Sept. 1907, Seattle, Wash. A mob of 100 Hindus reinforced by as many more attacked some 20 Swedish longshoremen. Owing to

the Hindoos being armed with knives, the Swedes used discretion and retreated. The Hindus were from Bellingham.

6. Nov. 1907. Five hundred white men from Everett, Wash. rounded up all the Hindus living on the waterfront of that city; they were taken to the City Hall for protection. The next day the Hindus packed up and left.

Toehold in the Prohibited Land

It was under such circumstances that hundreds of Sikhs, forced out of British Columbia, labored for many years in the sawmills of Washington and Oregon. Eventually the lure of California land and climate drew them southward until all of them had left the lumber industry of the U.S. With these Sikhs came the nucleus of people who brought with them to California the embryo of the famous Gadar Party.

Although the Sikh arrivals in California and the opposition to their entry was still insignificant compared to that against other Asians (127,000 Japanese arrived between 1901 and 1908), the growth of the Sikh community was accompanied by resentment and a clamor for restriction by labor groups. Popular magazines and newspapers reported that the country was experiencing a "Hindu invasion" and a "tide of turbans."⁷ Quite indicative of the public and official mood was the removal or resignation of officials like Hart H. North, the Immigration Commissioner in San Francisco, who was accused of favoring the Indians and had publicly declared: "The fact is that the great many Hindus coming here are strong men of the class of unskilled laborers. Any of them can get a dozen jobs the minute he steps on the dock at San Francisco." These pressures and official policies reduced the Sikh immigration to a trickle, though the legal situation did not change until the Immigration Law of 1917 included India in a "barred zone."

The denial of citizenship rights to Indian nationals was a serious setback to the development of the Sikh community. When some of the immigrants applied for citizenship, Attorney General Charles Bonaparte advised that they were ineligible since naturalization was restricted to "free white persons" and people of African descent. This position was in conflict with the then legally accepted definition that "Hindus are of the white, Aryan or Caucasian race, based on their history, features, shape of their skull and the framework of their body."⁷ About 70 Indians had been granted citizenship on the ground that

they had the same Aryan background as Europeans and were thus considered "white" persons. In the famous test case of Bhagat Singh Thind, who had been granted a naturalization certificate by the District Court of Oregon, the Supreme Court upheld the federal government's contention that in the enactment of the naturalization statutes, Congress understood the words "white persons" to mean only Europeans and not "Hindus."

A serious side effect of this ruling, which took away the rights of citizenship granted even prior to the Thind decision, was that the Alien Land Law could be enforced more easily against the "menacing spread of Hindus holding our land." The economic position of the Sikhs became quite precarious and any prosperity depended upon the ingenious means to circumvent the law.

The many-pronged effort by such groups as India League, under the dynamic leadership of J. J. Singh, the National Committee for India's Freedom (organized by Anup Singh), and by many other Indians and American sympathizers helped enact the quota and naturalization provisions in 1946. This granted an annual quota of 100 persons to India. It was not until 1965 that the immigration law with equality for all nationalities was passed.

The attitudes and adaptation of the early California Sikhs were greatly determined by the conditions of life in those days. They were victims of *zeit geist*, the spirit of the times. The European majority considered North America as their land. They had an aversion to the idea of anyone from a different race, religion, or cultural background owning a part of it or benefitting from it, except as a wage earner or a helper for a limited period of time. Discrimination in America was not directed at Asians exclusively. Turks, Syrians, Arabs, Italians, and other South Europeans and to some extent Middle and East Europeans were also considered less desirable immigrants.²

No discussion of immigrants to the U.S. can be complete without mentioning the seepage of many individuals across borders without authorization. For this reason the number of Sikhs was larger than the official figures indicate. The Sikhs continued to trickle across the Mexican border right up to 1946, the time when an immigration quota, although meagre relative to those for European countries, was set up for India. Each entry had its own unique and arduous problems, and fascinating stories are told by those who had

to resort to this method of entry. They could not enter even Mexico, but had to come to other South American countries such as Panama. In order to avoid local law enforcement officials, they usually concealed themselves during the day and walked by night, using gratuities and rewards at some places to minimize the risk of deportation. They avoided those spots where their predecessors had trouble crossing and had been deported. A few lived in Mexico for short periods, most learned Spanish and some married Mexican women. Of the latter, some were deported from Mexico and the identity of the rest was obliterated within a generation. Traffickers of illegal labor supply took advantage of those seeking entry into the U.S. by arranging to deliver them to a specified destination for relatively large sums of money. The new arrivals did not dare to repudiate the agreements or default on payments on reaching their destination for fear of being reported to the immigration authorities. They lived in constant fear that some of their acquaintances or co-workers might turn them in.

Political Activity and the Gadar Party

During entry and thereafter Indians got worse treatment than the nationals of other Asian countries, and this suited the aims of the British Government. When the Indians were made the targets of race riots, assaults by labor groups, and other forms of humiliation, it was usually with the tacit approval of the local authorities in Canada and the U.S.

Along with the feelings of frustration and bitterness came a realization of the need for a democratic self-government and political change in India. Immigrant Indians became convinced that the only way to obtain their rights in America was to overthrow the British Government in India, by violence if necessary. This intensity of feelings led to the formation of the *Gadar* (mutiny) *Party*, which was led and supported largely by Sikhs (although it was non-religious and non-provincial in character). After the initial organization in 1911-12, under other names in Washington, Oregon, and California,⁸ areas where the Sikhs worked, the Party moved its headquarters to San Francisco. There it began to publish a periodical called "Gadar," which eventually was adopted as the name of the Party.

At the outset of World War I, many members of the Gadar Party envisaged an opportunity to overthrow the overburdened and preoccupied

British Indian Government. Six to seven thousand Sikhs,⁹ the most famous names in the Gadar movement, left for India and lost everything, some even their lives at the hands of the British Indian Government.*

Survival of the Pragmatists

After the drastic attrition of the Sikhs in America during 1914-15, only about 2000 were left.⁹ Life for the survivors continued in the U.S. whether in the sawmills of Washington and Oregon or on the farms of California. For a variety of reasons, viz. the hostile attitudes of the labor unions and the lure of California land and climate, none of the original immigrants stayed in Washington and Oregon.

Many Sikhs began to consider the main purpose of their stay in America to earn, save, and hope for better days. This attitude was formed by the discriminatory citizenship and property ownership laws. The farm life in California was not as bad as the life of a laborer in India if a man could exercise fortitude and be practical. In a year like 1911, a farm worker typically would earn about \$45 a month. He would spend about \$10 a month as living expenses, and the savings in a month would be enough to buy nearly an acre of California land (\$30-50 per acre).⁸ These figures were about three times higher during the twenties.⁹

The fair-minded American farmers would address them without class distinction, as "Mr. Singh." They were known to be hard working and honest and were preferred over most other nationalities for farm work.⁹ There were no hostile labor unions to contend with, and in general people treated them well.⁸ Since a good many of them worked in groups with other Sikh friends, they could continue in their own *Little Punjab*. The land of California valleys is very much like that of Punjab but the absence of rain during summer makes it suitable for raising fruit. This fabulous land of almonds and walnuts, grapes, apricots, pears, peaches, plums, etc., had a tremendous appeal for them. Gradually many of them, bypassing and avoiding the discriminatory property laws, became prosperous, acquired land and other properties.

*The history of the Gadar Party movement or of the immigration policies in the U.S. and Canada are too long to be discussed here in any detail. Information regarding the Gadar Party is currently being accumulated for a new section of the S.E. Asia Library at the University of California, Berkeley.

Stockton Gurudawara

One of the largest groups of Sikhs worked on the farms in the deltas of the Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers, within a few miles of the city of Stockton. They built the first Gurudawara in the U.S. at Stockton in 1912, and on all important Sikh holidays during the year Sikhs from all over California celebrated together in the Gurudawara. This was also an occasion for meeting friends, relaying messages and sometimes for collecting mail. Many Sikhs without jobs, and particularly Indian students, stayed in the Stockton Gurudawara. The Sikh farm workers always considered it their responsibility to help the newcomers. The Gurudawara has also been a channel for community action, such as construction of a Khalsa High School in the Punjab and support and donations to other charities. In recent years they have sent numerous contributions to causes varying from defense of India to famine relief.

When some Sikh students from the University of California in Berkeley came to the Gurudawara and explained their difficulties in finding a place to live because of their turbans and beards, the community promptly purchased a house in Berkeley for Sikh students and named it the Khalsa Club. The progressive California Sikhs appreciated the value of and enthusiastically supported the political independence of India and education of Indians. They helped Indian students in getting jobs on farms during the summer vacations, and provided aid in other ways. Many of these students on returning home became influential political figures and government officials in India.

One must pay a tribute to the dedication and persistence of those Sikhs who, having dealt with the least informed and most narrowminded section of the American population over an entire lifetime, are still seen in the "form" (turban and beard) they inherited from Guru Gobind Singh. One can see them even now, usually with black turbans and white beards, during big celebrations in various California Gurudawaras. The hostile attitude of some sections of America in the early days toward the dress, customs and religious practices of Asians caused many Sikhs to remove their noticeable turbans and adopt the American custom of shaving off their beards and donning hats. This adaptation even extended to the "Sikh Temple" where chairs were introduced instead of sitting on the floor in the traditional Sikh way.

Sikh Women in California

As large as the number of Sikhs in California was, the absence of Indian women from the scene made community life far from stable or cohesive. There were only three or four Sikh women in California for several decades.⁸ The early Sikhs coming to an unfamiliar land with uncertain future and without any resources, sometimes working their way in countries in the Orient for a while before setting out, could not consider bringing their wives with them. Whenever they tried to gain admittance, the women were generally deported, since the immigration authorities wanted only "strong" single men capable of doing hard manual labor. As an example, on August 25, 1922, eight "Hindu" women, two babies and nine "Hindu" men arrived in San Francisco aboard the Chiyu Maru; they were all deported.¹⁰ The prevention of entry of women was singularly the most destructive factor that led to the problems of the Sikh population in the early days and caused the severance of bonds of the children of Mexican and American marriages from Sikhism. It is believed that because of this disintegration of the Sikh community, the effective number of Sikhs at the time of the 1946 immigration legislation was *less than one-fifth* the number thirty-five years earlier in 1910.

Although the Sikhs became financially capable of bringing their families, the restrictions on the entry of Indians made it very difficult to bring them. It was not uncommon for Sikh wives and husbands to be separated for a dozen years or more. For this reason many Sikhs returned to India, and some of them married Mexican or European-American women. Although these women were generally willing to stand by their husbands, some of the men developed an indifferent attitude toward the Sikh religion and culture and thought it expedient to assimilate themselves into the American culture. In most cases, the man of the house lost pride in his own background and the children followed the wishes of the mother. Also, the men generally worked long hours seven days a week and saw little of their children. They avoided names that sounded strange to the American ear. So instead of names like Joginder Singh, or Surjeet Kaur, the children of these marriages got names like Alfonso, Robert, Maria and Juanita. In those instances where these children grew up and married other Americans (for the boys this was invariably the case) or moved out of the community, they became a part of the great American melting pot of cultures

and their break with Sikhism became complete. In the families where the father and mother were both Sikh and emphasized the Sikh religious and cultural values, the results are much more encouraging. These young people, along with the arrival of new families since the immigration and naturalization legislation of 1946, form the vigorous, resurgent Sikh communities, the biggest of which is in Yuba City, California.

Future of Sikhs in America

A great hope for the future of Sikhs in America lies in the new immigrant Sikh and his close association with the pioneer Sikhs and their descendants. This is not because of any innate difference in the character of the new immigrants but due to a favorable set of circumstances:

- a. The new Sikh, proud of his background, comes from an independent India. Not only does he take equality for granted, he would be fully backed by his native country in securing his human rights in case it became necessary.
- b. After World War II, American has been drawn into global involvement with other people. The modern means of communication and a higher level of education, prosperity and awareness have brought about unprecedented changes in the American society. The Americans have not only begun to put the Constitution into practice with regard to all people, they are adopting some extreme methods to abolish the inequities arising from past practices. In many situations the minorities enjoy advantages over other persons. This environment could only be considered benevolent for Sikhism.
- c. The educational level and professional standing of the new Sikh put him at the middle or near the upper class of American society. Being in a different professional class usually ensures his interaction with the most liberal and cosmopolitan section of the American public where he usually has an advantage.

In this relatively benign social climate the Sikh student, with distinctly different ways, enjoyed a welcome and support on a university campus or in public life that few other foreigners did. Sikh students were the most sought-after guests at family dinner parties in university towns as Americans tried to project a positive image of this country in the eyes of foreigners. American professors and most friends encouraged Sikhs to

maintain their Sikh traditions, particularly turbans and beards. This warm reception reinforced pride in his culture and heritage and strengthened his resolution to preserve his religious values. Once he is established in a profession, his interaction with the pioneer Sikh community rekindles in a sense of religious unity and cultural pride that had become dormant due to the prevalent pressures of earlier days. The example of the new Sikh immigrants has encouraged many formerly clean-shaven Sikhs to restore their beards and turbans.

To be sure there are still some instances of discrimination in the American job market, but at the professional level such discrimination is neither widespread nor systematically directed at Sikhs. Once the Sikh minority with turbans becomes a familiar part of the American scene, the subconscious impression of their being transient foreigners will be replaced by that of *Sikh Americans*. Perhaps it requires more effort to enter a profession or get a job with a turban and a beard but the difficulties can be surmounted and the preservation of venerated values makes the extra effort worthwhile. Also, the Sikh is helped by civil rights legislation which would allow him to take a company to court if it denies him employment because of his turban and beard. (New York Sikhs have recently done this and won.)

In recent years Sikhs in the U.S. have been able to gain prominence for themselves in such fields as engineering, medicine, science, research and teaching, as leaders of industry and in a variety of other professions. Dalip Singh Saund was a member of the U.S. Congress from California in the early sixties and many more Sikhs are politically active these days. Many of the pioneers have acquired properties worth millions of dollars. Sikhs have served in the U.S. armed forces, some with beards and turbans (in fact, some with all five K's) intact. Ironically it is the excellence in the worldly things that is likely to provide a boost for Sikhism in America.

In the recent past many young European-Americans have begun to discover the truth and universality of appeal in Sikhism, its harmony with the cosmic order and its meaning to their own lives, largely through the efforts of Yogi Bhajan Singh. Their efforts to learn the Sikh Scriptures and the Punjabi language are indicative of their faith and dedication. Only time can tell what impact they will make on the practice of the Sikh religion in America. One can only

hope that the Sikh community will encourage their efforts to learn and in case of any misunderstanding will adopt a sympathetic but clearheaded and canonical approach.

So far any efforts at strengthening of the Sikh culture among the children must lie on the parents themselves. But the Gurudawaras which are essential as bases for any such efforts are being built wherever a fair-sized Sikh community exists. In California, in addition to the well-known Stockton and El Centro Gurudawaras, the Sikh community in Yuba City has constructed a new Gurudawara in 1970, with a capacity of nearly 2000 people in the main hall. The greater Los Angeles Area Sikhs celebrated the quincentenary of the birth of Guru Nanak by opening a new Gurudawara in Los Angeles. The number of Sikhs in the San Francisco Bay Area is approaching 1000. The Sikh Center of the San Francisco Bay Area was organized in 1966 to fulfill the religious, cultural, educational, and social needs of the Sikhs. Similarly, Sikh communities in metropolitan areas like New York, Chicago, Detroit, Washington, D.C., Houston, etc., have made considerable progress towards building Gurudawaras and in setting up Sikh study circles.

It is anticipated that with the new Gurudawaras acting as channels of operation, imaginative Sikhs will undertake the task of dissemination of knowledge about the Sikh religion and culture. A modest beginning has been made in Yuba City, where the leaders of the community have helped organize classes in the Punjabi language through the local educational institutions. Apart from the Sikhs, other local Americans have begun to participate in such classes in significant numbers so that they may develop better business relations with the Sikhs, who have become a strong economic force. It must be pointed out that even as early as a few years ago, Sikhs owned about 30% of the land in Sutter and Yuba counties. The percentage is bound to increase, considering the rate at which new Sikh families are acquiring properties there. The radio station in Yuba City allots a certain portion of broadcasting time to Punjabi programs.

The American Sikh has some positive and reassuring qualities. Instead of hankering after such positions as secretaryship of a Gurudawara, the new Sikh tends to be innovative, imaginative and action oriented. He realizes the need to

prevent the erosion of Sikh values in America, particularly among the Sikh youth. He appreciates the value of *Akband Paths*, which are held more frequently in California than they would be in a similar population in the Punjab. Yet he attaches greater importance to the teachings of Sikh history and culture and Punjabi language to the young in the belief that the practice of religion is greatly affected by cultural and social environment. He possesses the will and capability to present Sikhism to other Americans in an effective manner. All this is equally true of Sikh women, including the small number of European-American girls married to Sikhs, whose commitment to Sikhism is at least as strong as that of their husbands.

After decades of trial and tribulations, Sikhs and Sikhism are finding a favorable and fertile environment in America and their future is promising. The worldly success of the Sikhs is aiding the process by sustaining those who may waver under adverse circumstances. In the foreseeable future not only will the Sikhs constitute a vigorous minority in the American population but will also provide an inspiring example to other Sikhs all over the world.

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MODEL FOR A SUNDAY SCHOOL

MRS. GAIL SIDHU

The Sikh Center of the San Francisco Bay Area has used this model to organize its Sunday School. It is published here in the hope that more Sikh societies will set up some kind of educational program for the children of the members.

SUPERINTENDENT

- a. Complete responsibility for the entire program.
- b. Recruits teacher, aides, parent volunteers.
- c. Arranges carpools.
- d. Arranges for a meeting place.
- e. Buys equipment and supplies.
- f. Places notices in monthly bulletin.
- g. Sees that children take part in group programs.

TEACHER (head)

- a. Responsible for curriculum (Sikh history, religion, ethics, stories from the lives of Gurus, Punjabi language, Shabads and other songs).
- b. Should have experience in teaching or handling children.
- c. Must be dependable.
- d. Must know subject thoroughly.

PARENTS*

- a. Responsible for the attendance of the child.

*Parents must be called weekly to reinforce their awareness of the program. They must be made constantly aware that their children are the future of Sikhism in America.

AIDES

- a. Tutor or help children.
- b. Take over if teacher absent.

Any group interested in setting up a Sunday School should begin by observing programs in the wider community and should discuss it with others in order to gain ideas and further knowledge. The most important person to the school will be the superintendent. She should be a person with close contact with the families in the community. She should also be self-sacrificing and should love children. She will have to set aside *every* Sunday/Saturday for this work for many years to come. For this reason, this position should not be an elected office, but should be entirely voluntary. She and the teacher will have to set goals at each level for the children and will share ideas on how to maintain their interest and how to reward them for achievement.

PROBLEMS

- a. Punctuality.
- b. Attendance.
- c. Attitude.

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WASHINGTON REPORTS
The First Six Months at the Sikh Temple
DR. SHAMSHER SINGH*

The month of May 1972 will be always remembered for the opening of the first two Gurudawaras (Sikh temples) in the Eastern United States, in New York and in Washington, D.C.

The Gurudawara in Washington was inaugurated on Sunday, May 28. It is located at 3911 Military Road, N.W., near Connecticut, Wisconsin and Western Avenues. The ceremonies commenced with the inspiring Ardas (Prayer) invoking Guru's blessings for the success of the project. This was followed by melodious kirtan.

In his inaugural address, the Honorable Eric Gonzales, Minister for Political Affairs, Embassy of India, recalled his long personal association with the Sikh communities in Burma and the United Kingdom and said that he had great respect for the principles of Sikhism. Indeed they are the most acceptable to him, although he himself, as he said, is not a religionist. The Sikhs are an action-oriented people who always rise to the occasion. Recalling the complicated politics of the Indian Workers' Association and the Sikh temples in London, he said that this aspect was not too important because they always were able to forge a united front whenever the interests of their country or the Indian community so demanded.

The Minister lauded the opening of the temple as an achievement in itself. Apart from providing a place of worship, the temple would be useful in meeting the social needs of the community. The temple would be particularly helpful to the newcomers and Indian visitors to the town. He, therefore, hoped that the activities of the temple would expand rapidly.

Speaking earlier, Giani Dhanwant Singh, one of the founders of the Gurudawara in New York recalled the teachings of the Sikh Gurus stressing humility and service. Quoting from Poet *Bhai Vir Singh*, he said that the well-known herb *banafsha* grows low on foot of hills but the fragrance of its flowers spreads in valley after valley. This is

what the Guru expects of the Sikhs. Again quoting from another well-known Punjabi poet, *Bulle Shah*, he said that the Gurudawara was a living symbol of the Sikh belief of *Degh Tegh Fateh*—he hoped that the temple will provide sanctuary and food to every needy person, irrespective of his belief or origin. He congratulated the whole team of workers for the devotion to the cause and prayed that the Gurudawara be blessed with success.

In the six months since its opening, the Gurudawara has seen a great deal of activity: delicate hands scrubbing grease-laden kitchen, heavy hands knocking down the partition walls; the swishing of paint brushes, the sanding of walls turning youthful black beards gray; the soul-soothing kirtan, emotional speeches; the ringing of wedding bells, the naming of newborns; disorderly classes for the children, silent prayers to the Guru; and above all the greatest blessing of the Guru—*Degh, Langar*, food for everyone.

Came November, the 503rd birth anniversary of Guru Nanak, the first since the opening of the Gurudawara, joy and enthusiasm was unbound; the celebrations continued for four days. The program commenced with the start of Akhand Path at dawn on November 17, ending on the morning of November 19. A large number of amateurs—men and women—read the holy granth sahib, sangat listened and sewadars served Parshad and tea. After the Bhog of Akhand Path, the venue of celebrations shifted to the large hall of the Jewish Temple nearby, where Indians, non-Indians, Sikhs, non-Sikhs gathered to mark the auspicious occasion. On November 20, the actual anniversary day, the celebrations reverted to the Gurudawara. An amusing bout between nature and man added its own aura to the Deepmala—gentle winds blowing off the multi-colored candles, human hands rushing to light them again. Following the kirtan and bhog, home-made typical Indian sweets were distributed and the children had a great time playing with fireworks.

The main celebrations were serene and impressive. Welcoming over six hundred participants on behalf of the Ambassador of India, Mr. G. Shankar, said that it was pleasing to see such a large number of Indians, Americans and others

*Dr. Shamsheer Singh, an ardent Sikh and a well-known economist, is in the World Bank, Washington, D.C. His services to the Sikh community over the years as well as his dedication to build a Gurudawara in Washington are widely recognized. Dr. Singh is a member of the Advisory Panel of the Sikh Foundation and local representative of THE SIKH SANSAR.

assembled in this great capital city to mark the great festival honoring Guru Nanak. The keynote speech was delivered by Shri Yash Pal, a distinguished Indian journalist and editor of *Milap*. The following are some of his remarks:

"Guru Nanak carved out a path of love and peace in the jungles of hatred and bitterness. To him, human life was like a flower blossoming with everlasting joy, abiding in the True Source of its being and emitting fragrance all around. He belonged to humanity and his approach was universal.

"Guru Nanak did not preach, he distributed joy and sweetness through his simple and captivating shabdas. Man by nature seeks happiness; throughout his world-wide travels, Guru Nanak brought solace to the disturbed people.

"Man has invented innumerable implements of comfort, has broken the barriers of space, but the modern scientific society and the modern man are searching for peace and love. Stricken by technocratic anxieties, cloven by emotional conflicts, beset by economic insecurities, assailed by political doubts and cynicism, man today is a peculiarly plucked rooster as he struts along the path of civilization. In a developing society he is craving for abundance; in a developed and advanced society he is suffering from abundance. Poverty is considered to be a sin but luxury has proved to be a disease. Comfort has become the cause of unrest.

"Sometimes dissatisfaction is the result of frustration, but generally it is the result of the realization of the truth. What appears to be real turns out to be unreal. The question is how to realize the real—the eternal reality.

"The great Guru gave the answer—not through sermons but by an example from his own life. His father gave him some money to start business.

He did purchase some provisions for trading but gave them all away to the needy. To him the most profitable business was serving the needy. That was *sacha souda*. It brings peace and contentment. Peace is synonymous with harmony. Harmony comes from tolerance, between man and woman and nation and nation. Guru Nanak was the apostle of peace and tolerance."

Greeting the congregation on behalf of the Mayor, the citizens and the Government of the District of Columbia, Mr. Schaller, the Deputy Mayor, presented his salutations and congratulations on the auspicious day. He said that Lord God was present among us because he, a Christian-Lutheran, was speaking to five hundred Sikhs in a Jewish Temple. He felt that all the 75 million Lutherans, 15 million Jews and 10 million Sikhs were present in the hall. Recalling that Guru Nanak and Martin Luther were contemporaries, both were great reformers, believed in the right to practice one's own religion and attracted many people to their way of life, he said that it was exciting for him to be speaking five hundred years later to five hundred Sikhs in Washington. We all believe in peace and love and hopefully one day we will stop killing people in the name of God. Addressing the Indians, Mr. Schaller said that they come from a nation which is rich in culture, heritage and spirit and hoped that they would retain their culture, traditions and way of life. On behalf of the Mayor and the Government of the District of Columbia, Mr. Schaller wished the people of India well.

Before the concluding ceremonies *Siro Paos*—the book on Guru Gobind Singh by the late poet Puran Singh and published by the Sikh Center in San Francisco—were presented to the three speakers.



MY EARLY YEARS IN AMERICA

ADAPTED BY MISS J. P. SINGH*
FROM A NARRATIVE BY SARDAR PUNA SINGH

Among the Indian immigrants who came to the United States and Canada at the beginning of the twentieth century, there were a vast number of Sikhs. Their early experiences have become a part of American history of that period and must be noted as an aspect of contemporary Sikh history. Sardar Puna Singh of Yuba City, California, has made his home in the United States since that period and recalls the enthusiasm and spirit of brotherhood which prevailed within the Indian community during the early decades. His own experiences reflect some of the motivation and perseverance that is characteristic of many of the Sikhs who settled in America at this time.

It was at the age of sixteen that I first left my ancestral village to join the Indian Army and become a member of a Sikh regiment which was stationed in Western Punjab. I enjoyed the traveling and found military life to be reasonably interesting, but within two years I was ready to withdraw from the army and return to my home. I had heard that many people of my region were going to America. When I reached home, I learned that two older men from our village had recently departed for Calcutta, where they had booked passage on a ship going to Canada. There was little keeping me at home; my parents were deceased and my two uncles and four brothers were managing the domestic affairs and cultivating the family farms. Making a quick decision, I left for Calcutta with my family's blessings and enough money for the passage.

The ship set sail for Hong Kong with three hundred Punjabis of varying ages and backgrounds on board. Of the four other men from my village, I was the youngest. My fellow travelers were congenial and I felt at home during the long voyage. At Hong Kong we changed to another ship which sailed on to Canada.

Upon disembarking at Vancouver, we were greeted by fellow Punjabis who helped us find jobs and lodging. A group of us took jobs at a lumber mill where the foreman and many of the employees were Punjabis who had come to Canada within the past few years. The beginnings of the Sikh community were visible and we were comforted by the fact that all was not strange to us in this new country. There were a few Sikh families already living in Vancouver who joined

with the rest of us to celebrate the holy days commemorating the lives and deeds of our Gurus.

I was not to take part in the great growth and expansion of the Sikh community in Vancouver. About five months after we had taken our mill jobs, my friends and I heard that the United States was accepting Indian immigrants from Canada. Since our mill had been understaffed and we had been overworked for many weeks, we seized the opportunity to make a change. After passing physical examinations, we received our entry permits and purchased train tickets to California. The year was 1906.

On arriving in the Sacramento Valley, one could not help but be reminded of the Punjab. Fertile fields stretched across the flat valley to the foothills lying far in the distance. Most of the jobs available were agricultural and I found many Punjabis already working throughout the area. Here I spent the next three or four years doing farm work, traveling around the northern part of the state and meeting other Indians who had made their way to California.

In 1910 I, along with about twenty other Punjabis, took a construction job with the Southern Pacific Railway Company. Several months later we found ourselves in the state of Utah, where many of us decided to stay. The valley north of Salt Lake City was rich with farmlands; I soon started working in this area with a large sugar beet company which grew and refined its own sugar. While I was working for this firm, a friend and I had an opportunity to acquire our own land and we began to raise sugar beets for the same company. It was good to be a landholder again.

During those early years in California and Utah, the Punjabi community was small but

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closeknit. Not only did groups of Punjabis work together but there was also a tendency to congregate whenever there were holidays, whether Indian or American. In addition, there were two community-wide movements which evoked much interest and enthusiasm: the establishing of the local Gadar Party and the developing of a Sikh religious center at Stockton. When I first arrived in California, I heard of the area's Gadar organization and its efforts to promote India's independence. At the first opportunity, I attended one of the scheduled meetings and was quite impressed by the vigor and zeal of the men who were participating in and leading the movement. I, like many others, was immediately drawn to the organization and thereafter gave both monetary and moral support. The Gadar Party headquarters was formally established in San Francisco after I had settled down in Utah, but even there our small group of Punjabis would meet and raise funds to send to California.

The other unifying factor among the early Indian immigrants was that the vast majority were Sikhs. Many of us gathered together on religious occasions, and later when the Gurudawara was built in Stockton, it became the religious and cultural center of the Sikhs living throughout northern California.

There was generally a feeling of kinship among Indians living here at the time; people were generous with their time, money and labor. Not only did they support the common causes such as the Gurudawara or the Gadar Party, but they would also help each other whenever anyone was in need.

During the first two decades of the 1900's, Punjabis continued to arrive in large numbers and, after remaining here a few years, many returned to India. After spending several years in Utah, I too was longing to go back to India for a short stay. Both my partner and I were happy with our farming enterprise; I wanted only to visit India, see my family, perhaps marry and then return to Utah. It was difficult at this time, however, to bring a wife into the country without United States citizenship and thus far no Indian in the area had been granted his permanent papers. Applying for citizenship seemed like a futile exercise to me until one day when I encountered a state doctor in the nearby town of Ogden. He was familiar with the local Punjabi

community and he was aware of the difficulties that non-European immigrants were having in obtaining their permanent papers. He offered to help me submit my application and see it through the various legal channels leading to the central office at the state capitol in Salt Lake City. I followed the doctor's suggestions and then waited for the results. While I was somewhat hopeful, my friends were completely skeptical. They did not believe that the papers could be obtained so easily or that I, with my beard and turban, would be the first to receive them. Three weeks later we were all surprised when I was granted my citizenship papers.

The following year, 1922, I left for India. I had visited my family, married and made arrangements for returning to the United States when I received a letter from a friend in Utah informing me that all citizenship papers issued to Indians had been revoked and that I might have difficulty bringing my wife into the country. It was an unexpected development, but we decided to take a chance and left India in August 1923. We reached Vancouver three months later and from there we entered the United States at Seattle. There was no difficulty obtaining the entry permit.

Soon after we arrived in Utah, I was back at work on the farm and my wife was busy adjusting to a new way of life. We were just beginning to feel at home when the winter snows began to fall. Several weeks later my wife became snow-blind. She regained her eyesight after one month, but her doctors warned me that living in a snow-bound climate would continue to be a danger to her vision. I had no choice but to make arrangements to move before the following winter. In November of the same year we left our home, farm and friends, and moved to California.

The Sacramento Valley had not changed very much since my first stay there, but my own circumstances were radically different. I came now with a wife and a son who had been born that summer in Utah. I had left a farm of my own and now I was working for others. It was a struggle in the beginning and continued to be one until 1929 when I was able to purchase land again. The country was on the brink of the economic crisis of the 1930's, yet it was from this time on that I embarked on a dairy and farming enterprise that allowed us to settle down comfortably and make a permanent home.

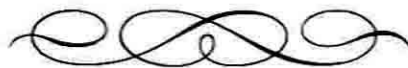
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A businessman, a doctor,
A scientist and an engineer,
A man of the world at peace with himself
in the turbulence of real life,
Armed with the philosophy and teaching
Dynamicism and practical approach to life
as a gift bestowed on him by the Tenth Guru,
Spare him the insult in order not to rouse his anger,
Give him brotherly love and you will unearth
a treasure of human emotions,
Rely on him and he will reward you,
Cross his path and he will lose his patience,
Here is the monument of charity, practicality
and emotions, salt of the earth, forgiving
and generous.

—N. S. Kapany (1970)



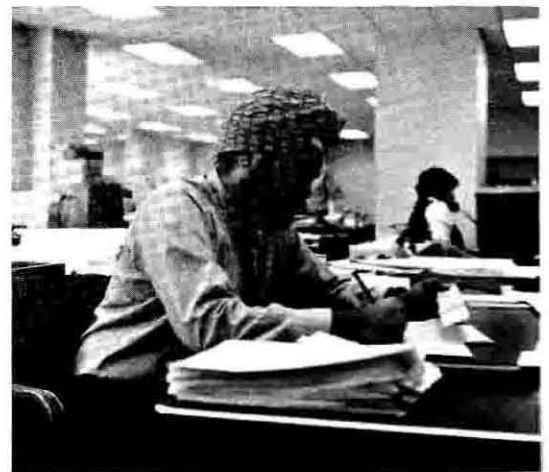
A CATTLE RANCHER



A SOLDIER

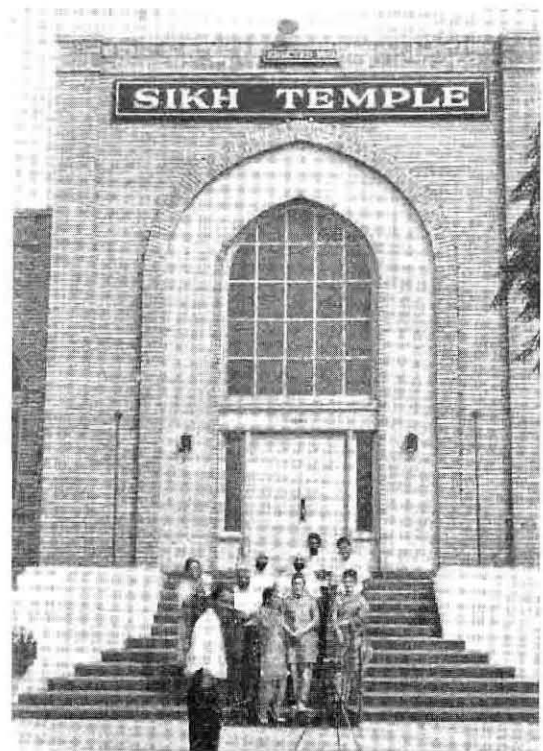
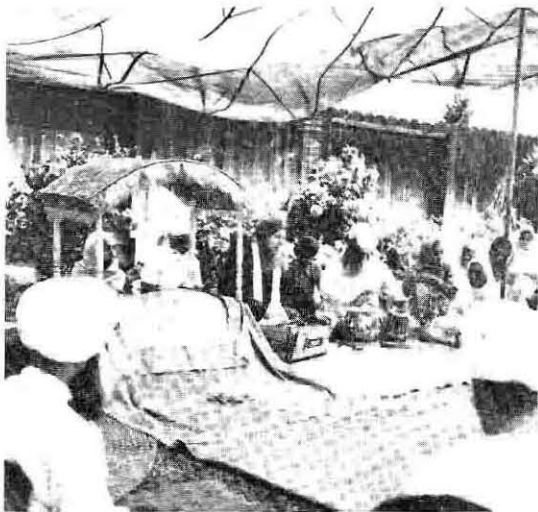


A FARMER



AN ARCHITECT

His places of worship . . .



And his honors on visits to India . . .



PHOTOS COURTESY OF
INTERNATIONAL PUNJAB SOCIETY



THE SIKHS OF SUTTER COUNTY

LAWRENCE A. WENZEL*

The East Indians of Sutter County are a unique ethnic group in northern California in several respects. Aside from their unusual apparent culture involving the exotic dress of nearly all of the women and a small percentage of the men and their curried food, they are unique in one other respect. The dominant religion in this group is Sikhism and nearly all of their activities are colored by it, including their formal association activities. The vigorous precepts of this religion have contributed to the considerable economic success of these people.

The East Indian Group

In north central California in the area between Gridley and Tudor and Yuba City and Sutter City, there is an ethnic group of Punjabis from north-west India numbering about fifteen hundred.¹ They are united in common cultural tradition in which the most noticeable characteristics are the Sikh religion, Punjabi language, curried food, Indian dress, orchard farming, and keen interest in Indian national affairs. These people are for the most part Caucasian,² and, if there is an absence of any identifying cultural characteristic such as distinctive dress or speech, they are often mistaken for Spaniards, Mexicans or Italians.

While membership in ethnic groups is most often ascribed,³ the membership in the East Indian group is voluntary in the sense that a person is able, in the absence of distinctive speech or name, to choose to enter the dominant society. This investigator has observed a few cases in which the offspring of these East Indian parents have chosen to participate in the larger, dominant American culture and maintain only nominal contact with the East Indians. Often it is the person's name that allows the members of the local community to identify the East Indians. The most common name is Singh, and this is used as a second name or a family name. Half of this ethnic group takes Singh as a family name, and about eighty percent of all others use it in the full name somewhere. Singh has a religious meaning for those who are adherents of the Sikh faith. There are names not so distinctive as to be identified as East Indian, such as *Bains*, *Rai*, *Takher*, *Sekhon*, *Teja*, *Purewal*, *Chima*, *Shine*

(corruption of *Chima*), *Thiarra*, and *Sabota*.

The East Indian social activity in this ethnic group is centered around four events that are variously religious and political. The calendar of events with explanations follows:

1. *Baisakhi Day* celebrates the beginning of the Sikh religion. It is always celebrated in April, although the actual event it celebrates occurred on April 13, 1699. It was at this time that the Khalsa was first established when five followers were baptized and took oaths to follow the teachings of the Gurus. This was celebrated in the past at the temple at Stockton, California, by members of the local East Indian groups.

2. *Guru Gobind Singh Day* is celebrated in December or January, according to the lunar calendar, and commemorates the birth date of Guru Gobind Singh, the last of the Gurus.

3. *Martyrdom Day* is celebrated on May 10. This is an unusual event to be celebrated by a religious body since it commemorates all of the martyrs who gave their lives for Indian independence. The earliest heroes paid tribute are those who died in the Mutiny of 1857, with others of later years recognized in their turn. The special consideration given this event is apparently related to the important involvement of early East Indian Sikhs in the *Gadar Party*, which made many sacrifices for Indian independence. It is celebrated at the Stockton Temple.⁴

4. *Republic Day* is celebrated on January 26 and commemorates the adoption of the Constitution of India in 1950. This is the most popular celebration for the Sutter County Sikhs and calls out the heaviest attendance.

Most of the above religio-cultural events, as well as several other special events, were until recently attended at the Stockton Temple, which was constructed in 1912. It was the center of the Pacific Coast Khalsa Diwan Society, Inc. (Free Divine Communion). Stockton has been the

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recognized center of East Indian, and especially Sikh, activities in the U.S. since 1907.⁵ The leadership of the Pacific Coast Khalsa Diwan Society and the Indian cultural societies of the Sutter County area have made a joint effort to increase the number of religio-cultural events to one per month.⁶

A considerable effort has been made to center East Indian cultural activity in the Sutter County area and thereby reduce the dependence upon the Stockton Center. Recently a very large and beautiful gurudawara was constructed in Sutter County. It is said to be the largest outside India and designed in the style of the Golden Temple at Amritsar, Punjab.

Cultural Characteristics

Origin. A large majority⁷ of the East Indians in the Sutter County area had as their point of origin in the Punjab, a relatively small area of northwestern India, a strip about one hundred twenty miles long north of New Delhi. There were seven families who came to the Sutter area directly from the Fiji Islands, but they or their families had earlier departed from the Punjab. As would be expected, a universal condition among the members of this ethnic minority is an ability to use the Punjabi language in at least some minimal way.

Material culture. A second characteristic of this ethnic group is the distinctive food, which has two notable features, the *roti* and the curried meat and vegetables. The *roti* is an unleavened bread resembling the Mexican tortilla but more flexible. Curried vegetables, most commonly from the family garden, with ground red pepper are the common fare.

Traditional Indian dress is used by nearly all of the women and five to ten percent of the men. Women's wear consists of a trouser-like attire called the *shalwar* and a tunic called the *kameez*. The *sari* is worn only on special, leisurely occasions because of its functional inutility. The men's dress and personal adornment are a beard, a turban, and bracelets. These are the traditional attire of devout Sikhs and had their origin in the doctrines of Guru Gobind Singh.

Religion. A third feature of the East Indian community is the Sikh religion. Among the East Indian population of the Sutter County area, a knowledge of the Sikh Gurus is a universal condition. How devout individuals are in any group is difficult to ascertain. There are, no doubt, extremes among the Sikhs, as within any religious

group. On the surface it appears that Sikhism is a prominent influence in the lives of the East Indians in California.⁸ As the writer talked to members of this ethnic group, they commonly made reference to the statements of their favorite Gurus and thus gave their particular interpretations to their religion. It should be mentioned that there is no evidence of any fundamental difference within the various interpretations. This investigator, in keeping with others⁹ who have had contact with the East Indians in California, believes Sikhism to be an important influence in East Indian life. It is necessary, therefore, to give a brief sketch of the Sikh religion.

Sikhism is found almost entirely in the Punjab, but there are small enclaves of Punjabi Sikhs in most parts of the world—Vancouver, B.C., the Fiji Islands, Indonesia, Ethiopia, East Africa, and Sutter County.

It is a fairly new religion, having its origin in the fifteenth century in a geographic locale that was politically dominated by Islamic forces. It must be noted that these people had a Hindu world-life view, and the militancy of the Moslems was alien to this culture. These conditions created cultural conflicts in the religious portion of life which wanted solution.

The recognized founder of Sikhism is Nanak, born in 1469 near Lahore, Punjab, of parents who were of Kshatriya caste. Nanak's childhood education consisted of tutorial instruction under a Brahmin, and he later studied under a Moslem.¹⁰ Nanak's most important composition is the *Japji*, a twenty-five page prayer that is recited in its entirety by the most faithful Sikhs during the morning and on other occasions.

The teachings of Nanak are simple, and they are syncretic in nature as follows: (1) there is one God—the True Name; (2) this is a world of illusion; (3) ritual is a distraction; it turns men away from contemplation of God; (4) idolatry, pilgrimages, asceticism are to be avoided.

After the death of Nanak, nine Gurus, or teachers, were responsible for the development of the particular patterns of this religious philosophy.¹¹

The eight Gurus who followed Nanak variously emphasized the importance of mutual responsibility, personal responsibility, the responsibilities of being a householder, the value of constructive secular effort, equalitarian ideals, the value of missionary work, and the value of secular success.

The tenth or last Guru was Guru Gobind Singh,

who occupies a prominent position in the teachings of Sikhism. He has had perhaps the greatest lasting effect upon Sikhism. He gave emphasis to the need of the Sikh's being courageous and militant, as shown in the following quotation:

*I am the son of a brave man, not of a Brahmin;
How can I turn my attention to Thee, O Lord,
and yet forsake domestic duties: Krishnavatar.¹²*

Guru Gobind Singh reinforced the emphasis that had been given to equalitarianism by the earlier gurus. The following quotation is an expression of this emphasis:

The bright and the dark, the ugly and the beautiful, the Hindus and the Muslims have developed themselves according to the fashions of different countries.

All have the same eyes, the same ears, the same body and the same build—a compound of the same four elements. Akal Ustat.¹³

An event occurred in 1699 which has been a permanent influence on the form and style of Sikh practices. In that year Guru Gobind Singh called a large meeting on Baisaki Day at Anandpur, on March 30, 1699.

When all were seated, he drew out his sword and cried, "Is there anyone here who would lay down his life for dharma?" . . . At the third call, Daya Ram, a Kshatriya of Lahore, rose from his seat and offered himself. The Guru took him into an adjoining enclosure where a few goats were kept tied, and seating him there cut off a goat's head. He came out with the dripping weapon and flourished it before the multitude and asked again, "Is there any other Sikh here who will offer himself as a sacrifice?" At this Dharam Das, a Jat of Delhi, came forward and was taken into the enclosure, where another goat was killed. In the same way three other men stood up one after another and offered themselves for the sacrifice. . . . The Guru, after dressing the five in handsome clothes, brought them before the assembly. He baptised them with sweetened water stirred with a dagger and called them his beloved ones. . . . When the Guru had administered baptism to his five tried Sikhs, he stood up before them with folded hands and begged them to baptise him in the same way as he had baptised them. . . . They were to be his Khalsa, his embodiment, nay, his other self, his beloved Ideal. . . .

About 80,000 men were baptised in a few days. Those who partook of the ceremony were taught to believe in One Invisible God and mission of the Ten Gurus. Particularly they were to shun the use of tobacco, which besides being injurious to the health makes one lazy. They were to wear the same signs, all beginning with the letter K: long hair (kesh), a comb (kangha), a pair of shorts (kaccha), an iron bracelet (kara), and a sword (kirpan). They were to have a common surname, Singh, or lion.¹⁴

Out of this dramatic incident Guru Gobind Singh made several permanent contributions to the doctrines and style of the Sikh religion. Especially noteworthy are the emphases given in the Khalsa to democracy, monotheism, the mission of the Ten Gurus, the use of the title Singh as an identifying name for the Sikh believer, and the acceptance of the five K's for the devout followers of Guru Gobind Singh.

There have been no gurus since Gobind Singh. The only teacher is the book known as the Holy Granth, sometimes called the Granth Sahib. As it stands today, it is a collection of all the most important writers and poets who have contributed to Sikhism. It is treated with reverence in the following ways: (1) covered with a silken cloth when not being read, (2) no smoking of tobacco in a room where it is kept, and (3) during religious ceremonies an attendant, sitting with the Granth in front of him, continuously waving a brush-like fan over it to prevent any dust or insects from landing on it.

The more ethical doctrines of the religion are given in the following quotation from a religious pamphlet:

This life of praise is not to be one of idle mysticism, but of active service done in the midst of worldly relations. "There can be no worship without good actions." These actions, however, are not to be formal deeds of so-called merit, but should be inspired by an intense desire to please God and to serve fellow men.

The Gurus laid the foundation of man's uplift . . . on man's own humanity, his own character . . . which helps us in moral crises. Life is like a cavalry march. The officer of a cavalry on the march has to decide very quickly when to turn his men to the right or left. . . . In much the same way, when face to face with an evil, we have to decide at once

*what course of action we are going to take. We cannot then consult a religious book or a moral guide. We must decide on the impulse. And this can be done only if virtue has so entered into our disposition that we are habitually drawn towards it and evil has got no attraction for us.*¹⁵

The above remarks are an expression of a contemporary intellectual leader in the Sikh religion, Teja Singh. He claims that good actions please God, but he also emphasizes the military qualities that are required by the devout Sikh.

Circumstances of Present East Indian Life

Other characteristics and activities of the East Indians in the Sutter County area can be best understood with a brief historical background. The approach in this report is institutional to the extent that the background of contemporary conditions is presented in the following areas: (1) the general immigration and legal controls imposed upon this population; (2) the economic activities of the group; (3) family life conditions; (4) political and nationalistic interests. There is only a small amount of historical information available in documents. This is supplemented with statements taken from a few long-term Indian residents. Only that information is presented which has been reinforced by several people and which has been given to the investigator on several occasions. The Indians who have given the information have said that they are willing to have their names appear in any report.

Background and current conditions. Data on the growth of the East Indian population in the Sutter County area are not available. It can be assumed that United States immigration policy and California public policy affecting all East Indians had a comparable effect upon the East Indians in Sutter County. There is no attempt in this treatment to equate entry into the United States with entry to Sutter County. The attempt here is to give the circumstances faced by all the East Indians arriving in the United States. The increase in the East Indian population in the United States was sporadic in the face of several adverse circumstances. Public policy concerned with immigration was inconsistent in the early years when East Indians began to arrive at these shores, from 1898 to 1910. While a few East Indians had emigrated to the United States before 1904, it was in that year that there was a substantial increase in the num-

bers from less than 100 to 250. The numbers arriving annually remained at about this level until 1907.¹⁶

In 1908 immigration officials began to turn East Indians back for fear they would become public charges.¹⁷ In 1910 a great increase to 1,787 immigrants was the result of a change in the treatment of East Indians at the San Francisco Port.¹⁸ In the decade from 1900 to 1910, the number of immigrants was 4,713,¹⁹ but in the decade ending in 1920, there had been only 2,082 East Indians admitted as immigrants in the United States.²⁰ This reduction was primarily the result of the restrictive Immigration Act of 1917, which set up the Asiatic Barred Zone in which India was included.²¹ The Act also gave a great deal more power to immigration officials, required literacy tests for those over sixteen years of age, and doubled the head tax.²² While the Act was effective in restricting Indian immigrant laborers, it allowed students to enter this country with few restrictions.²³

Another very important public policy effective in restricting East Indian entry was the 1924 Immigration Act²⁴ which established immigration quotas based upon the origin of the foreign-born population in 1890. This resulted in a virtual cessation of legal immigration from India.

The restrictive nature of the immigration as it concerned East Indians was reinforced by a Supreme Court decision in which Justice Southernland stated that a "Hindu" is not a "free white person" within the meaning of the Revised Statute 2169 relating to the naturalization of aliens, and hence was ineligible for American citizenship.²⁵ It was the decision in this case which reaffirmed the policy of cancellation of most citizenship certificates of East Indians who had been naturalized for a fifteen-year period after 1908.²⁶

While the United States Government made it virtually impossible for East Indians to enter this country legally as permanent residents, there was still illegal entry available for those who chose to try this route. It is difficult to get any approximation of the numbers who came here without the sanction of immigration officials. Jacoby makes a conservative estimate that as many as three thousand East Indians entered the United States illegally between 1920 and 1930.²⁷ In the present study, the investigator interviewed six fathers of thirty-seven families who admitted illegal entry and who now have legal status. These were old fathers, averaging sixty-four years, and

they perhaps represented far less than what could be a realistic percentage of "illegals."

Congress passed the Luce-Celler Bill in 1946 which in effect allowed East Indians to become citizens. This law also removed India from the barred zone, thus allowing India to be assigned a quota, which was set at one hundred per year. The quota accounts for only about twenty percent of the Indian arrivals, while most of the others are admitted as non-quota immigrants. Generally they were relatives of naturalized citizens—brides, children, and dependents. Of the sixty-two parents involved in this research, forty-six arrived in the United States after 1947. If the populations interviewed in this study were anything approaching a fair sample of the whole East Indian population (37 or 142 families), the arrivals since 1947 are substantial. It appears that this population managed to grow beyond the quota of one hundred because of the liberal features of the law. The more recent revision in 1966 has allowed for the growth to the present number of fifteen hundred.

Conditions Encountered by the Early East Indians

Even though entry into the United States was accomplished, the life chances offered to the early East Indians had great restrictions imposed upon them. There were two anti-alien land laws passed in California in 1913 and in late 1920, the latter by initiative procedure.²⁸ While East Indian immigrants during this period were unable to hold legal title to land, they did most often engage in farming. Das reported in 1923:

*The majority of Hindustanees resident on the Pacific Coast, especially in California . . . are farm operators. They take a lease of a ranch either on a share or cash basis and operate it for a period varying from one to three years, at the end of which time they renew the lease or move on to another farm.*²⁹

Another observer³⁰ reported in 1934 that of the little over four and a half thousand East Indians on the Pacific Coast, three thousand were farmers, two-thirds of them being of the Sikh religion. When marriage occurred, only the non-Indian spouse had title to the land. The Indian husband was a resident without citizenship or the right to own property. Six of the seven men in this study who were in the United States longer than thirty years first labored on the farms and then married an American wife (five of the wives were Mexican-

Americans). If these East Indians were able to pay for farm land, it was legally purchased by the wives.

The early involvement of East Indians in agriculture has been carried to the present in the Sutter County area. In 1965 there were one hundred forty-two East Indian names in the telephone directory, and one hundred of these were on the mailing list of the Sutter County Agricultural Extension.³¹ There were, in addition to the farm owners, the farm laborers, whose exact number is not known, but there were at least twenty-five and several had families. When the occupations and activities of the thirty-seven families involved in this research were studied, there were only three who were not engaged in agricultural activities. All three, however, have some sort of ties with agriculture.

The rapid expansion of orchard holdings, amounting to more than thirty percent of the total, has been made because of the East Indian's ability to save. There were several conditions which made this possible. Of greatest importance was the absence of any strong expectations for a style of life which was expensive. They commonly resided in a modest frame house, although a few of the most wealthy live in newly constructed homes. The food costs were low and seldom exceeded seventy dollars per month for an average family of five.³² Vegetables raised in a family garden were the most common feature of their diet.

Another condition contributed to saving—there was no religious or cultural expectation regarding taking holidays. A ten-hour day, seven days a week, is common when there is work to be done.

Substantial amounts of money have been loaned without interest or with a very low interest rate, and without legal record.³³ The "cheap money" lending practice is less common than it was at one time, and on larger personal loans a low interest rate is now charged.

The physical, economic, and social hardships endured by the very early arrivals from India were great. Three men over seventy years old have told this investigator of sleeping in fields or on hay in bars in the early days, cooking their meals over campfires and working ten or twelve hours a day for a dollar and a half. These men, who had been in the United States well over fifty years, claimed to have saved from one-half to two-thirds of their earnings. When several East Indians could manage it, they formed communal dining clubs. According to Das:

*When there are two or more persons together, they form a mess, and manage the affairs in turn. When a large number of men work together, they establish clubs consisting of sometimes as many as twenty. The club is run on a democratic basis.*³⁴

In the Sutter County area there were at least three groups of men living together in 1965, in a fashion which was similar to the above arrangement.

Absence of women of their own ethnicity was an important condition prior to 1946. As late as 1940, the sex ratio claimed to be 460 males to 100 females.³⁵ A good many of the early immigrants had married in India, and a few had children but they had left their families when they came to the United States.³⁶ During the early years, marriage of East Indians to Americans was not common, but by 1920 a few had taken wives, these being mainly Mexican-Americans. It appears that some small degree of assimilation of East Indians into Mexican-American society had begun by 1920. One author has called this "*circuitous assimilation*," by which he means that a very small ethnic minority (East Indian) was taken into the large society by way of joining a larger and better recognized ethnic minority (Mexican-Americans).³⁷ Of the thirty-seven families involved in the interviews for this research, there were no marriages involving a male East Indian with a non-East Indian woman. Only six of these were Mexican-American, Spanish, or mixed Spanish and/or Mexican and Indian. There were two who had married Anglo-Americans and one whose wife was dead. In the latter case no information was offered. All of these had married prior to 1946, at which time it became possible to obtain an East Indian wife. If "*circuitous assimilation*" was important among the East Indians, it did not appear to be prominent in the Sutter County area at the time of this investigation. All of the males married to women with a Mexican heritage were early immigrants.

On the contrary, there appears to be a strong preference on the part of East Indian males for women from India. Of the twenty-seven male parents who came to the United States since 1946, all had East Indian wives; six of these still had their wives in India. The only two first generation male parents interviewed had taken East Indian wives, and one of these had taken a trip to India, at which time he married an Indian girl. There were about a dozen weddings between

1960 and 1970 in the Sutter County area, performed in the traditional manner by the Sikh religious functionary. Other weddings occurred within this ethnic group, but the ceremonies were not so traditionally East Indian.

Political interest and activities. There are several indications that the Sutter County Sikhs recognize the utilitarian value that may be realized from political action. Firstly, they have managed to obtain congressional sponsorship with immigration problems and which allowed them to bring dependents to this country as permanent residents. The East Indians accomplished this, in part, by identifying themselves with the party which has elected the Congressmen from the Sutter County area. About eighty-five percent of the East Indians were registered with the majority party.³⁸

Secondly, the recognition given to several events and men indicate that there is respect for political success. This is noticeable in the India Republic Day celebration. The great leaders, Nehru, Gandhi, and some of the Sikh martyrs, are paid great respect.

Thirdly, there is an expression of love for the mother country as indicated by the speeches and movies which are presented over a period of about six hours at the Independence celebration.

The Martyrs Day celebration is indicative of the religious and political sentiments held by Sutter County East Indians. It pays respect to all of those who gave their lives while helping India to gain independence.

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Local News *(Continued from page 122)*

Singh can become members of this organization. It has started publishing a quarterly newsletter, "Sikh World," since January 1972, to exchange news about Sikh activities and articles on Sikhism. The discussion of a Code of Conduct for Sikhs in the July issue has stimulated debate and dialogue among Sikhs.

—Trilochan Singh

१६

Local News

WASHINGTON, D.C.

The news from Washington, D.C., is heartening. Two of the largest Sikh organizations, Guru Nanak Foundation and the Sikh Cultural Society, have joined to celebrate the 503rd anniversary of the birth of Guru Nanak. This unity should help the community realize its potential.

—Ursula Gill

HOUSTON

A humble but significant step has been taken by the Sangat of Houston in establishing the Sikh Center of Gulf Coast Area. The Sangat received help and encouragement from J. P. Singh and Sukhminder Singh, who have been active in the Sikh Center of the San Francisco Bay Area. Shangrand has been celebrated every month since the inception of the organization, which also aims to provide for social, cultural and educational needs of the Sikh community.

—Sukhminder Singh

NEW ORLEANS

Although the New Orleans Sikh community is relatively small, they are beginning to assemble for worship fairly regularly. They will celebrate Guru Nanak's birthday jointly with families from the Baton Rouge, La., and Leland, Miss., areas.

—Diane Singh

SAN FRANCISCO

Two of the most prominent figures in the International Punjabi Society, S. Meharban Singh Dhupia of Delhi and S. Gurbachan Singh Gill of London, visited the San Francisco area in September 1972. They both spoke to a gathering of Punjabis assembled at the International House of the University of California, Berkeley, and emphasized the importance of forging bonds between Punjabis all over the world. S. Meharban Singh Dhupia also disclosed some future plans of the Society, including an International Register of Punjabis.

Other visitors to this area included Prof. Harbans Lal from the University of Rhode Island, Dr. Trilochan Singh from Detroit, and Dr. and Mrs. Jasbir Singh from Louisiana, all of whom

are representatives of the SIKH SANSAR in their respective areas.

The Sikh Center of the S.F. Bay Area has started Sunday School for children. The instruction includes Sikh religion and history, stories from the lives of the Gurus, and the Punjabi language. The teacher, Mrs. Jagjit K. Sidhu, is a California accredited teacher and has extensive experience.

Sant Mihaan Singh and his party from Ludhiana Distt. visited the San Francisco Bay Area in October and held Amrit Parchar. In the city of San Rafael, he administered Amrit to eleven men and women.

—Gail Sidhu

DETROIT-WINDSOR

Sikh Cultural Society of Michigan. The Society has established a Gurudawara at 6620 W. Fort Street, Detroit, Mich. The Sangat meets in the Gurudawara fortnightly. The major share of service for the purchase and running of the Gurudawara goes to the devotion of Dr. N. S. Grewal and family. Dr. Grewal is the General Secretary of the Gurudawara.

Sikh Cultural Society of Windsor-Metropolitan, Canada. The Society holds biweekly Diwans at the homes of the member families. The program includes recitation of *Asa Di War* by the whole Sangat, discussion and interpretation of Gurbani and Shabad Kirtan by individuals. Windsor is part of Ontario Province in Canada, but geographically it is a twin city of Detroit, being located just across the Detroit River. Sikhs from Windsor and Detroit coordinate their activities and participate in one another's activities. S. Kuldeep Singh is the General Secretary of the Windsor group. He is not only a GurSikh, but also a scholar and interpreter of Gurbani. Some non-Sikh families have become regular visitors at these congregations.

International Sikh Youth Federation. This federation has been organized to promote interest in Sikhism, the true Sikh way of life, and to create zeal for missionary work. In Toronto the society has organized a Sikh history competition for young Sikhs for the past two years. Any persons who believe in one God, the Ten Gurus, Guru Granth Sahib, and Amrit of Guru Gobind

(Continued on page 121)



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About the Sikh Foundation

Founded in the year 1967, the SIKH FOUNDATION is a non-political and non-profit organization. The basic purpose of the SIKH FOUNDATION is to disseminate knowledge about the history, literature, art, culture and religion of the Sikhs. These objectives of the Foundation are undertaken by publication of books and journals, commissioning of artists, sponsoring of lectures and seminars, awarding fellowships to scholars, organizing religious functions, instituting awards and assisting in the establishment of literary, art, cultural and religious centers.

The Foundation is particularly proud in having the patronage of such eminent and dedicated Sikhs as H. H. YADAVINDRA SINGH, SARDAR H.S. MALIK AND SARDAR KIRPAL SINGH NARANG. The Board of Trustees manages the activities of the Foundation with the active assistance and advice of the Advisory Panel consisting of eminent Sikhs residing in various cosmopolitan cities in the U.S.A. and Canada. Furthermore, participation of Sikhs and Non-Sikhs is solicited in efficiently executing the various authorized projects of the Foundation.

Since its inception, the Sikh Foundation, in collaboration with local Sikh organizations, has hosted visits and sponsored lectures, TV, radio and newspaper interviews by numerous Sikh scholars viz: DR. GOPAL SINGH, PROF. GANDA SINGH, SARDAR H. S. MALIK, DR. GOBIND SINGH MANSUKHANI AND SARDAR PARKASH SINGH BADAL.

In the year 1969 the Sikh Foundation undertook with the assistance of the Pacific Coast Khalsa Diwan Society the publication of a 55 page 'QUINCENTENARY BULLETIN' covering the celebration of the fifth centennial of the birth of Guru Nanak Dev Ji in various parts of U.S.A. Nearly 2000 copies of this publication

have been distributed free of cost. In 1970 the Foundation announced the publication of a REGISTER OF SIKHS IN USA AND CANADA. This register consisting of approximately two thousand individuals residing in U.S.A. and Canada with a photograph of the head of the family has been published. Copies of this register are available and a second edition is planned in the year 1973-74.

In the year 1971, the Foundation announced its decision to publish a quarterly journal—THE SIKH SANSAR. The inaugural issue of the SIKH SANSAR was published in March 1972. The Editorial Board of the journal has enlisted some of the greatest scholars of Sikh culture on its editorial advisory board. Furthermore, the Sikh Foundation has announced the publication of a book entitled THE HISTORY AND RELIGION OF SIKHS by PROF. GANDA SINGH. This book is scheduled for printing during the years 1972-73.

During the past five years the Sikh Foundation has assisted various local Sikh communities on specific projects and has provided financial contributions to THE SIKH CULTURAL SOCIETY, New York, THE SIKH CULTURAL SOCIETY, Washington, THE SIKH TEMPLE, Yuba City, THE PACIFIC COAST KHALSA DIWAN SOCIETY, STOCKTON, and SIKH CENTER, San Francisco.

The Board of Trustees of the Foundation is at present embarked on developments of a five year plan and various exciting projects are under consideration. This five year plan is scheduled to be formulated by the end of 1972.

In its most ambitious and exciting hopes and plans of the Sikh Foundations, it earnestly solicits the advice, assistance and financial contributions of all Sikhs and sympathizers.

N.S. Kapany, President

Life in These United States

In order to provide additional space for the direct participation of our readers, we are pleased to add a new feature in the SIKH SANSAR. In this column we will include brief narratives of very personal and humorous experiences of the Sikhs in the U.S.A. and Canada. We believe these experiences to be part of our heritage and character and are meant to rekindle our sense of nationalism and relationship with the richness of our traditions. They also impart special meaning

and color to the culture we are so proud of. It is not unrealistic to emphasize, however, that the continuation of this column depends entirely on your communications with us. Unless the readers communicate their experiences with us, we will not be able to continue this column. Please share with others the pleasures of your way of living through this column. We hope to hear from you regularly. Whenever you so indicate, your name will be withheld.

—Bhai Harbans Lal

A Sikh Doctor in Virginia

An elderly woman was admitted in a West Virginia hospital under the care of Dr. Gurcharan Singh Kanwal. At the time, the doctor had just moved to the area and his name was not familiar to the public. One night the patient called her nurse to ask for the doctor.

Nurse: What is the name of your doctor,

madam?

Patient: I don't know the name of my doctor but I am sure he can help me.

Nurse: But I cannot get the doctor unless I have his name. Can you describe the doctor to me?

Patient: How can you not know my doctor? Don't you remember *that little Jesus?*

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You are also invited to submit articles, news items and other material pertinent to these subjects. Please read carefully the "Instructions to Authors" inside back cover.

In the previous issue

Editorial	
The Ghadar Movement (announcement)	
The Sikhs in California, Dr. C. H. Loehlin	
The New Sikh, Vikram Singh	
Character Profile, Charles L. Barrier	
An Episode in the Quest for American Citizenship, Dr. Harold S. Jacoby	
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Letters to the Editor	
Book Review, H. S. Everest and Rev. C. D. Matheson	

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GURUDAWARA SKETCH

1. Name of the Gurudawara _____
2. Address _____
 Number *Street*

 City *State* *Zip Code* Telephone _____
3. Date of Inauguration _____
4. A Brief Historical Sketch (*Attach sheet if necessary*)

5. Please Enclose Pictures of the Gurudawara (black and white photos of high clarity showing different views)
6. Current Number of Adult Sangat Members _____
7. Current Number of Children Below 18 Years of Age _____
8. Any Other Information _____

9. Name of the Respondent _____
10. Title _____ Date _____

Signature

1. Name of the Organization _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____ Telephone _____

4. A Brief Historical Sketch (*Please attach sheet if necessary*)

6. Is the Membership by the Family or by Each Adult Individual?

8. Any Other Information _____

2. The second part of the document describes the various methods used to collect and analyze data, including interviews, surveys, and focus groups.

3. The third part of the document presents the results of the study, showing that the accounting system is a critical component of the organization's financial management and that it plays a key role in ensuring the accuracy and reliability of financial data.

4. The fourth part of the document discusses the implications of the findings for the organization and provides recommendations for improving the accounting system and enhancing financial management practices.

5. The fifth part of the document concludes the study and summarizes the key findings and recommendations.

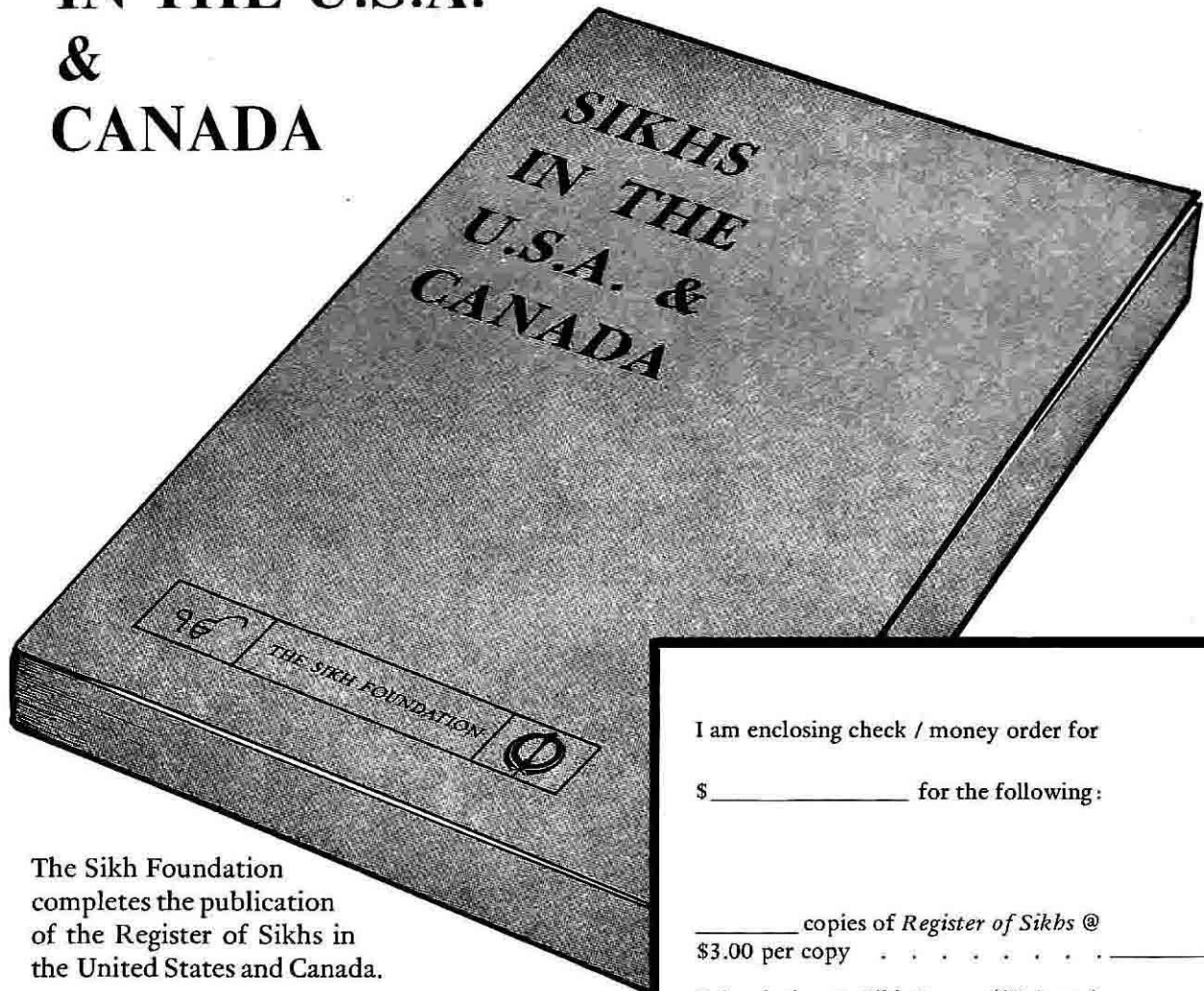
10. Title _____

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1. All materials to be submitted for publication in SIKH SANSAR must be original and pertain to the fundamental religious precepts, the history, religion, and culture of the Sikhs.
2. The material should be typewritten, double-spaced, preferably on 8½" x 11" paper.
3. The article should be about four to ten typewritten pages. In exceptional circumstances longer articles would be considered for serialisation in consecutive issues.
4. All articles must contain an abstract which describes in encapsulated form the contents of the article.
5. References to material on which the contents of the article are based should be included to enable the reader to locate related material. The authors should take special care to see that as many pertinent publications as possible are referenced.
6. If a photograph is to be included in the manuscript, two black and white glossy prints of high contrast and clarity must be supplied.
7. Punjabi script portions of the manuscripts submitted must be typewritten originals of high quality.
8. Acceptance of the manuscript will depend upon the originality, clarity of presentation, and scholarly approach to the subject.
9. At this time no payment is envisaged for the material to be published in SIKH SANSAR.
10. A brief biographical sketch of the author and list of his other publications should also be included.
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